

# The Paper Pulpit

(Reflections from the Pastor)

## The Solemnity of Pentecost

Today we celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost. In ancient times God approached us through the Jewish prophets and through their major leaders such as Abraham and Moses. It was through Moses that God gave us His Ten Commandments, commandments that allowed us not only to live as God intended us to live but to live with each other in peace and communion. Then in the fullness of time God came to us in His Word made flesh, in His only begotten Son Jesus who became man and thus brought the nearness of God into our very own humanity. “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,*” reports St. John in the Prologue to his gospel.

After He lived among us, suffered and died for us, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, God came to us, and still does even now, in His Holy Spirit. This is the Feast of Pentecost. From a distance God approached us through His chosen prophets. Drawing near to us God approached us in His Son, Jesus Christ. Now God approaches us and is near us in a closeness that is both mysterious and yet at the same time in the most intimate way possible. He shows us his love in so many ways. God has made us temples of His Holy Spirit in baptism. He gives us His Body and Blood in Eucharist. He gives us forgiveness of sins in confession. Yes, we have a loving and forgiving God.

This theme is very much on the mind of our new pope, Pope Francis. All of his words and actions have been centering on the mercy of God, on His love, His forgiveness, and His closeness to us as revealed in how we care for, protect, and love those who are afflicted. Injustice, physical affliction, and spiritual affliction are the things that motivate Pope Francis not only in his actions but in the teachings he gives us, especially in the homilies he delivers in the Masses he celebrates for those who work in the Vatican as well as elsewhere.

Pentecost is a celebration of a new beginning, a celebration of God’s New Creation. Pope Francis is the embodiment of how God’s love brings about freshness and newness of life, especially our spiritual life. I want to note that Pope Francis is putting great emphasis on what we as individuals can do in order to bring the presence of God into our world. He hasn’t talked much about programs and he hasn’t talked much about doctrine. Rather he has concentrated on us as individuals. This raises to mind some questions we might ponder about our own personal relationship with the Holy Spirit. Here are some questions that come to my mind.

Do I carve out special intimate time to share with the Lord, time for prayer, being in God’s presence and worship at Mass? Jesus spoke of having eyes to see and ears to hear. To what things am I giving my attention? We are busy and concerned about many things but we should also be very concerned about our personal relationship with God and with others.

In his Letter to the Philippians St. Paul tells us: *The Lord is at hand. Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.* (Philippians 4:5-9)

Have I asked God to inspire me, to place on my heart what He wants for me? Have I sincerely and openly asked God to lead me so that I know from the heart what will bring happiness, what will bring unity and peace to others and to myself? Am I being led to what is good, to what is peaceful, to what will be of benefit to others and to myself? When I am seeking some outcome or to satisfy some desire, am I being honest about it? Do I have an interior motive? Am I being honest with myself? What will be the likely outcome of my decision? What will the course of action lead to? Do my words or actions help or hurt others? Do I bring peace or do I cause division in my words and actions? Do I speak well of others? Do I appreciate the gifts and talents of others?

The inspiration of the Holy Spirit often comes to us in enlightenment. All of a sudden we see, we see what is happening, we see what is unfolding, and we see what God is doing in us and through us. Take for instance our parish. I have been pastor here for almost one year. This is a phenomenal parish. I am so blessed to be here. On this Feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit speaks to us in His Church, in the Mystical Body of Christ, where he prays *that there be no division among them and that they be one.*

On this Feast of Pentecost, let us prayer to Jesus to continue to send His blessings on us and our parish that we may be a source of unity and peace that loves and ministers well to all.

**Thinking about the priesthood?** In Middle or High School and thinking about being a priest? Here are a couple of opportunities this summer to meet with other young people also thinking about the priesthood. See Fr. Jim for details.

**Who?** Grades 6th-10th

**When?** June 20 - 22, 2014

**Who?** Grades 11 and older

**When?** July 11- 13 2014

**Where?** House of Formation, Holy Cross Diocesan Center, 3710 East Ave. South, La Crosse, WI 54601

This weekend retreat of prayer, fun, liturgy is hosted by seminarians. There will be discussions about being open to priesthood and what priesthood is. If you are interested in attending, please contact Fr. Jim or at the diocese, Shirley in the Office for Vocations at [svonruden@dioceseoflacrosse.com](mailto:svonruden@dioceseoflacrosse.com) or (608) 791-2667. Please download and send in the age appropriate consent and medical forms to the above address. The forms can be found at [www.dioceseoflacrosse.com/vocations/events](http://www.dioceseoflacrosse.com/vocations/events).

**Fishing:** Interested in going fishing? My boat or yours? See me to schedule a night.

**Annual Appeal Update:** Thank you to all those who pledged to the annual appeal. We need everyone’s participation, not just Someone Else’s. So far we are getting back about \$5,000 “tax free.” Please submit your pledge to the parish office no later than Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup> for this fiscal year’s drive. All funds received after June 10<sup>th</sup> will be for the 2014-15 pledge.

*Sincerely in Christ, Fr. Jim Trempe*